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ABSTRACT

This study provided information concerning existing and ideal leadership styles and assessed the relevancy of the Concern for "Production" and Concern for "People" grid concepts to a more global evaluation of principals. A sample consisted of 115 experienced teachers enrolled in graduate courses at two universities located in two midwest urban centers. Teachers were asked to evaluate their principals, using a 12-item Principal Leadership Style Questionnaire to a) rank his overall effectiveness, b) rate his consideration for teachers, development of learning programs, and plant management skills, and c) respond to a scale operationalizing the concepts of concern for "Production" and "People," adapted from Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid. Results indicated a positive linear relationship between the principal's perceived effectiveness and his scores on "People" and "Production" dimensions. Parallel relationships were found between his perceived effectiveness and his ratings on consideration, learning programs, and plant management. Principals perceived below average ranked lower on "People" skills than on "Production" skills. Further research concerning the effect of leadership on students and teachers is recommended. The Principal Leadership Style Questionnaire and a five-item bibliography are included. (MJM)

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PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EFFECTIVENESS

AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS

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Urban teachers were asked to evaluate their Principals by : (1) ranking his overall effectiveness; (2) rating his consideration for teachers, development of learning programs, and plant management skills; (3) responding to a scale operationalizing the concepts of concern for "Production" and "People," adapted from Blake and Mouton's Managerial Grid. Results indicated a positive linear relationship between the Principal's perceived effectiveness and his scores on both "Production" and "People" dimensions. Parallel relationships were found between his perceived effectiveness and his ratings on consideration, learning programs, and plant management. Principals perceived below "Average" ranked lower on "People" skills than on "Production" skills.

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLES AND EFFECTIVENESS AS PERCEIVED BY TEACHERS

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Educational leadership style has been a topic of continuing interest among researchers in educational administration. A recurring focus in these investigations has been the simultaneous use of concepts relating to a "people" dimension and to a "task" dimension. Research in a variety of areas has found these two behavioral dimensions to be critical to effective leadership. Bales and Slater (1955) identified them as social-emotional and tasks needs when investigating small group functioning. Halpin (1967) has demonstrated the feasibility of translating the concepts of Initiating Structure and Consideration from the Leadership Behavior Description Questionnaire to identify effective leadership behavior in school personnel. A more recent study be Sergiovanni, Metzcus, and Burden (1969) demonstrated that teachers with differing need orientations expressed preference for administrators who demonstrate both "people" and "task" skills.

The central focus of this study utilizes the "Concern for Production" and "Concern for People" dimensions as developed by Robert Blake and Jane Mouton and applies them to an analysis of the school principal's behavior. The prime instrument of evaluation was an observation scale devised and adapted by the author from Blake and Mouton's The Managerial Grid (1964). The five managerial styles relating to "Concern for Production" and "Concern for People" were built into a scale relating to the principal's school performance. In addition to responding to this scale, the sample of experienced teachers was asked to assess a principal's performance as to his overall effectiveness, and to rate his consideration for teachers, concern for running an efficient school plant, and promotion of an excellent learning program. The purpose of the study was to

provide information as to existing and "ideal" leadership styles, and to assess the relevancy of the "Production" and "People" grid concepts to more global evaluations of principals.

The original scale of 15 items was given to a sample of ten graduate students and university professors (all familiar with the Managerial Grid), who were asked to rate the five behaviors described in each of the 15 items as to their relation to the components of "Concern for Production" and "Concern for People." Additionally, the scale was given to 28 people with teaching experience to determine the relevance of principal activities and responsibilities (e.g., new teacher orientation) to the principal's job as they perceived it in their school. Feedback from this pilot data resulted in the removal of three items and the partial or total revision of seven others. The final scale had twelve items, each with five statements relating to the five managerial styles developed in the Managerial Grid. For example, on an item relating to teacher evaluation, if a principal was perceived as "clearly and directly letting a teacher know what his limitations were," he would be rated high in "Production" concerns and low in "People" concerns (9,1); by contrast, if the teacher perceived this activity as one in which the principal "either did none or did not reveal the results," the principal would be ranked as low in both the "Production" and "People" dimensions(1,1). (In order to reduce the effect of "artificial" variance in calculating scores, the items were scored 1, 2, and 3 rather than using Blake and Mouton's "inflated" 1, 5, and 9 numbers.)

The final scale and related questions were given to a sample of 115 experienced teachers enrolled in graduate courses at two universities located in two midwest urban centers. First, the teachers were asked to rank the principal ("by your own standards of what you consider an excellent principal

to be") as "Excellent," "Good," "Average," "Below Average," or "Poor." Second, they ranked the same principal on one-to-nine scales as they saw his actions reflecting: (1) consideration for teachers; (2) concern for running an efficient school plant; and (3) concern for an excellent learning program. Third, the teachers were asked to respond to the Managerial Grid scale[1] by evaluating the same principal (who was designated as the one with whom they had the most recent experience).

The major findings of this study may be summarized as follows:

1. The 115 principals were rated by the teachers in overall excellence with the following frequencies: Excellent: 25; Good: 35; Average: 32; Below Average: 17; Poor: 6. The final two categories were combined to insure an adequate cell size.
2. A positive linear relationship was found between the teacher's ranking of the principal (e.g., Excellent) and both the "Production" and "People" scores. Principals ranked in the higher categories had significantly higher mean scores (with significance at least $p < .02$) in both the "Production" and "People" dimensions than did principals ranked in each succeeding lower category.
3. Mean t tests showed no significant differences between the principal's scores on the "Production" and "People" dimensions except in the category of those principals ranked Below Average-Poor. In this case these principals scored significantly higher ($p < .02$) on the "Production" dimension than on the "People" dimension.
4. A positive linear relationship was also found between the principal's

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1. The final scale is included in the appendix of this paper.

rank on his degree of perceived excellence and his ratings with regard to consideration for teachers, concern for plant management, and concern for the learning program. Significant differences were found in favor of the higher ranked principal, with one exception in the area of the principal's concern for an efficient school plant. With respect to this behavior, there was no significant difference between principals ranked "Average" and those ranked "Below Average-Poor." All but one of the differences cited were significant at the $p < .02$ level; the other was significant at the $p < .05$ level.

5. Mean t tests between principal ratings on concern for teachers, efficient plant management, and concern for the learning program showed no significant differences except in that category of those principals ranked "Below Average-Poor." In this category their efficient school plant scores were significantly higher ($p < .05$, two way test) than their scores relating to both concern for teachers and concern for the learning program.

6. Overall, few differences emerged with regard to perceptions by male versus female teachers and perceptions of male versus female principals. Similarly, no significant differences emerged with regard to elementary or secondary schools.

These results further demonstrate the feasibility of utilizing leadership evaluation schemes incorporationg "task" and "social-emotional" dimensions in evaluating the performance of educational leaders. While the results of this study show a general positive linear relationship between such dimensions and the teacher's rating of the Principal's degree of excellence, it should be noted

that the "Below Average-Poor" Principal is perceived to be most limited in his skills in the social-emotional and learning program domains rather than in his skills in running an efficient school plant. As a corollary implication, the "Production" or "task" dimension is perceived to be more closely related to the principal's developing an excellent learning program than to his concern for plant management skills.

Examining the responses of those teachers who saw their principals as "Excellent," we can identify behaviors which were typical of principals in that category. The "Excellent" principal tends to thoroughly orientate new teachers. He tends to plan extensively, but does this planning with the honest solicitation of input at teachers' meetings. Problems which develop in the school are neither hidden nor handled in an authoritarian manner; they are explored in depth. Evaluation of teacher performance is open and tends to focus on means by which that performance can be improved rather than overt or covert criticism. The "Excellent" principal is respected and trusted by the teacher, and is seen as one who cooperates with the teacher in getting the teaching job done.

By contrast, examination of responses of those teachers seeing their principal as "Below Average" or "Poor" reveals a greatly different pattern of behavior. Orientation for new teachers is minimal. Teachers are placed in a clearly subordianate role, and their input for major educational decisions is not solicited Teachers' meetings tend to be merely explantions of administrative decisions. At the same time, planning appears to teachers as very global and lacking in specifics. Evaluation of the teacher's performance is either not done or is not made known to the teacher. Teachers who "fit" are those who don't rock the boat. Most teachers find it convenient to "stay out of the way" of this principal.

The research on principal leadership styles has still not addressed the most critical questions. The performances of teachers and students are still the critical dependent variables. Does an "ideal" leadership style of the principal (or any leadership pattern, for that matter) make any difference in the inputs or outputs of students and teachers? And if it does, in what domains does it make a difference? Data from part of this study's sample tentatively indicated that there was no difference in the amount of time a teacher stayed at a school with an "excellent" or "good" principal compared with the time he stayed at a school with a supposedly less desirable principal. Charters (1967) discusses evidence which more extensively supports this finding (i.e., that family factors are a much greater influence in teacher turnover than are factors related to working conditions). Until questions relating to the effect of educational leadership styles upon teaching and learning output are addressed, we will still be investigating the interesting concepts at the expense of the important results.

PRINCIPAL LEADERSHIP STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

(The numbers in the parentheses following each choice represent the Managerial Grid leadership style represented by that statement.)

In the following set of statements, please circle the letter of the statement in each set which best reflects the conditions at your school. Please be sure to circle an item for all 12 sets.

I. The relationship of most teachers to the principal involved:

A. Staying out of his way as much as possible. (1,1)
B. That of supervisor and subordinate. (9,1)
C. A give and take, one-to-one exchange. (5,5)
D. A friendly and jovial relationship. (1,9)
E. A synchronized and cooperative effort. (9,9)

2. On the whole, the principal appeared to:

A. do very little planning. (1,1)
B. cooperatively and extensively plan, allowing for flexibility in procedure. (9,9)
C. plan only in a very broad way. (1,9)
D. plan realistically in a way which prescribed most procedures. (5,5)
E. individually plan in such a way as to specifically prescribe almost all procedures. (9,1)

3. Violations of procedure by teachers were usually dealt with by the principal's:

A. turning his head to avoid it. (1,1)
B. taking direct disciplinary action. (9,1)
C. taking a forgive and forget attitude. (1,9)
D. discussing the matter with the teacher in order to understand the violation in its broader context. (9,9)
E. making it clear what the proper procedure was in order to prevent future problems. (5,5)

4. Teacher's meetings at the school were largely:

A. friendly social gatherings. (1,9)
B. open, candid, and authentic communication between teachers and administrators. (9,9)
C. explanations of the decisions which the administrators had already made. (9,1)
D. regarded with apathy by teachers and administrators. (1,1)
E. give and take discussions which the administrators sometimes weighed in their decisions. (5,5)

5. When conflicts arose among the staff, the principal generally:

A. sought a compromise solution - "we split the difference." (5,5)
B. "put his head in the sand." (1,1)

C. examined the problem in the core of its educational base and sought to identify the common stakes of the participants. (9,9)
D. tried to smoothe it over by talking teachers out of it. (1,9)
E. dealt firmly in suppressing it. (1,9)

6. With respect to curriculum changes proposed by teachers the principal:

A. discouraged or stifled most significant changes. (9,1)
B. promoted and rewarded many teacher curriculum innovations. (9,9)
C. would first determine if the superintendent's office approved of them. (1,9)
D. encouraged those changes which did not seriously "rock the boat." (5,5)
E. usually did his best to avoid any kind of personal involvement. (1,1)

7. With respect to teacher hiring, efforts were made by the principal to:

A. consider the needs of the job in relation to the abilities of the applicant. (9,9)
B. secure "well rounded" personnel. (5,5)
C. in a minimal way to secure minimally qualified personnel. (1,1)
D. secure personnel who "fit" into the organization. (1,9)
E. get people who know how to teach ("know how to get the job done.") (9,1)

8. With respect to orienting new teachers, the principal took the approach of:

A. putting the new teachers out to "sink or swim" on their own merits. (9,1)
B. orientation of teachers to the point of making them aware of school procedures. (5,5)
C. an extensive orientation which enabled the new teacher to see his work and position in relation to the total school program. (9,9)
D. easing them into the social group by the use of a maximal number of social contacts. (1,9)
E. permitting them to go their own way as they chose. (1,1)

9. In his teacher evaluation, the principal:

A. clearly and directly let a teacher know what his limitations were. (9,1)
B. adopted a friendly, non-critical approach (1,9)
C. attempted to identify the means by which the teacher could achieve mutually agreed upon teaching goals. (9,9)
D. utilized about an equal dose of praise and criticism. (5,5)
E. either did none or did not reveal the results. (1,1)

10. The descriptive phrase which perhaps best characterizes the behavior of the principal is:
A. passively satisfied. (1,1)
B. other-directed (took his cues from the environment.) (1,9)
C. production oriented. (9,1)
D. respect and trust of others. (9,9)
E. a "realistic" compromiser. (5,5)

11. The goals of the school seemed to be largely:

A. centered around linking individual effort and organizational purposes. (9,9)
B. put on a material, quota basis (e.g., "more students achieving at a higher level.") (9,1)
C. very general ones which everybody could support. (1,9)
D. neither explicitly nor implicitly identifiable. (1,1)
E. balanced between pupil achievement and teacher satisfaction dimensions. (5,5)

12. Relations among teachers at the school generally centered around a theme of:

A. apathy; teachers did not express much concern for either their work or other staff members. (1,1)
B. cooperation; teachers were highly concerned about the professional and personal welfare of other teachers. (9,9)
C. competitiveness; teachers were highly conscious of how their performance compared with others. (9,1)
D. friendliness; teachers were mostly concerned about getting along well with their peers. (1,9)
E. a balanced approach; concerns were about equally balanced between professional and social matters. (5,5)

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